

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:ACDA/IR/REG:JYOUNG

APPROVED BY:S/S-O:DLMACK

ACDA/IR:LSLOSS

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R 272320Z JUL 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 186100

EXDIS

FOL RPT PARIS 21594 ACTION SECSTATE INFO LONDON BONN MOSCOW

NATO 23 JULY QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 21594

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NOFORN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR UR FR PARM

SUBJECT: SAUVAGNARGUES VISIT TO MOSCOW: NUCLEAR

ACCIDENTS ACCORD AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER

BILATERAL DISARMAMENT STEPS

REF: PARIS 21468 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR PACTS AND DISARMAMENTS

PAGNIEZ, WHO ACCOMPANIED SAUVAGHARGUES TO MOSCOW, HAS

NOW, ON CONFIDENTIAL BASIS, GIVEN US CERTAIN INSIGHT

INTO THE BACKGROUND OF THE JUST-COMPLETED FRENCH-SOVIET

NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS ACCORD AND FRENCH REACTIONS TO SOVIET

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EFFORTS TO INVOLVE FRANCE IN FURTHER BILATERAL AND MULTI-

LATERAL DISARMAMENT PROJECTS. END SUMMARY.

1. PAGNIEZ EXPLAINED THAT THE LIMITED, PURELY TECHNICAL NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS ACCORD JUST AGREED TO IN MOSCOW HAD ITS IMMEDIATE ORIGIN IN A SUBSTANTIALLY MORE AMBITIOUS TEXT THE SOVIETS HAD PRODUCED IN THE WAKE OF A DISARMAMENT DISCUSSION DURING GISCARD'S MOSCOW TRIP. ALTHOUGH PAGNIEZ DID NOT OFFER DETAILS, HE SAID THAT THIS EARLIER SOVIET DRAFT WENT A CONSIDERABLE WAY IN THE DIRECTION OF US-USSR "PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR" ACCORD OF 1973, AND WAS IN ANY CASE EVIDENTLY AIMED AT CIRCUMSCRIBING THE INDEPENDENCE OF FRENCH DETERRENT FORCE. THE CRUNCH CAME DURING GROMYKO'S MOST RECENT VISIT HERE WHEN, WE ARE NOW TOLD, SAUVAGNARGUES MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT FRANCE HAD NO INTENTION OF CONSIDERING A TEXT OF THE SCOPE THE SOVIETS HAD PROPOSED, AND GAVE GROMYKO A DRAFT OF THE NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS ACCORD AS THE ONLY PART OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL WHICH THE FRENCH WERE INTERESTED IN. ALTHOUGH MINOR POINTS APPARENTLY HELD UP THE FINAL AGREEMENT UNTIL RECENTLY, PAGNIEZ SAYS THAT IN ALL MAJOR RESPECTS ITS PROVISIONS ARE VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL WITH THOSE OF THE DRAFT SAUVAGNARGUES HAD GIVEN GROMYKO. PAGNIEZ HAS PROVIDED US WITH AN AUTHORITATIVE COPY OF THE LETTER SAUVAGNARGUES SIGNED IN MOSCOW, CONTAINING THE AGREEMENT, WHICH WE ARE TRANSMITTING BY AIRGRAM.

2. GIVEN THIS BACKGROUND, PAGNIEZ SAID SOVIETS NOW SHOULD NO LONGER BE UNDER ANY ILLUSIONS THAT THEY CAN MANEUVER FRANCE INTO A FARTHER REACHING BILATERAL NUCLEAR DIALOGUE, AS THEY HAD EVIDENTLY HOPED--A FACT WHICH HELPS CONSIDERABLY TO EXPLAIN THE CURIOUSLY INTENSE FRUSTRATION GROMYKO DISPLAYED ON HIS RECENT DEPARTURE FROM PARIS, WHICH WAS ATTRIBUTED AT THE TIME TO LACK OF FRENCH INTEREST IN THE MULTILATERAL DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS SOVIETS HAVE ALSO BEEN DANGLING BEFORE FRENCH. AS PAGNIEZ PUT IT FLATLY: "THERE ARE NOW NO FURTHER BILATERAL DEALS IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD IN THE WORKS, OR EVEN ON THE HORIZON."

3. AS FOR THE WELL KNOWN SOVIET MULTILATERAL DISARMAMENT PROJECTS, THE SITUATION IS NOT VERY DIFFERENT.
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PAGNIEZ AGAIN CONFIRMED THAT GOF WAS NOT OPPOSED IN PRINCIPLE TO A WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE, BUT HAD TOLD SOVIETS REPEATEDLY THAT ALL NUCLEAR POWERS WOULD HAVE TO AGREE TO PARTICIPATE. SINCE, GIVEN CHINA'S POSITION, THIS IS HARDLY LIKELY, THE ISSUE REMAINS A LONG-TERM TALKING POINT. PAGNIEZ SAID THE FRENCH ARE ALSO NOT OPPOSED, A PRIORI, TO THE SOVIET PROPOSALS REGARDING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION, BUT, LIKE MOST

OTHERS IN WEST, ARE QUITE CONFUSED AS TO WHAT SOVIETS ACTUALLY HAVE IN MIND, ALTHOUGH ISSUE WILL CONTINUE TO BE PURSUED "WITH INTEREST" IN GENEVA.

4. ASKED WHAT, IF ANYTHING, MIGHT THEN BE RESULTS IN DISARMAMENT FIELD OF A POSSIBLE BREZHNEV VISIT TO FRANCE THIS YEAR, PAGNIEZ REPLIED THAT, TO HIS KNOWLEDGE, NO DATE FOR BREZHNEV VISIT WAS SET IN MOSCOW; BUT THAT, IF

REZHNEV CAME, THE COMMUNIQUE WOULD HAVE TO CONTENT ITSELF WITH GENERALITIES AS OFTEH IN THE PAST.

5. COMMEHT: PAGNIEZ' EXPLAHATION HELPS TO UNDERSTAND NOT ONLY GROMYKO'S HOTICEABLE FRUSTRATION WITH FRENCH OVER DISARMAMENT DURING HIS LAST VISIT HERE, BUT ALSO THE EVIDENT LACK OF SOVIET ENTHUSIASM FOR ELEVATING THE FRANCO-SOVIET NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS ACCORD TO THE LEVEL OF A MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT, I.E., TO EXTENT OF JUSTIFYING A KOSYGIN VISIT TO PARIS FOR THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY DEGAULLE'S MOSCOW TRIP. AS WHITTLED DOWN BY FRANCE, THE FRENCH-SOVIET NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS ACCORD WAS IN FACT MORE ADVANTAGEOUS TO GOF, WHICH WAS ABLE TO USE IT TO SUGGEST THAT MOSCOW TAKES THE FRENCH NUCLEAR FORCE SERIOUSLY, THAN TO SOVIETS, WHO APPARENTLY HOPED TO TRADE A MUCH BROADER TEXT, WITH ALL ITS IMPLICATIONS, FOR CONTINUED GOOD ATMOSPHERICS HELPFUL TO GISCARD.

6. AS FOR GOF, IF PAGHIEZ' ACCOUNT IS ACCURATE, THE FRENCH APPEAR TO HAVE HANDLED AN AWKWARD PROBLEM WITH COURAGE AND DISCRETION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISARMAMENT, REPORTS, MINISTERIAL VISITS, NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE186100
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ACDA/IR/REG:JYOUNG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760290-0046
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760715/aaaaangu.tel
Line Count: 154
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, NOFORN
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, NOFORN
Reference: 76 PARIS 21468
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 APR 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <24 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SAUVAGNARGUES VISIT TO MOSCOW: NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS ACCORD AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER
TAGS: PFOR, PARM, UR, FR, (SAUVAGNARGUES, JEAN)
To: GENEVA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006